DEMOCRATIC

GERMAN REPORT

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PRICES DOWN AGAIN

More For Everybody in East Germany

Prices for food, shoes, stockings and dozens of other articles were radically cut in the German Democratic Republic on September 6th.

The price of cooking fat was halved, and about one-third was knocked off the price of sweets, shoes and razor-blades. Other big cuts were in the price of Perlon stockings (like nylon), which are 25% cheaper; a pound of macaroni is reduced from 91 pfennigs to 75 pfennigs; a glass of beer is down from 53 pfennigs to 48 pfennigs.

These price cuts came into force immediately. At the same time it was announced that postal rates would be reduced from October 1st, so that in future a local letter will cost only 10 pfennigs instead of 16 as hitherto. Other rates were reduced in proportion.

The big price reductions mean that consumers in East Germany will save 1,800,000,000 marks in the next twelve months. This represents a saving of slightly over 100 marks for every man, woman and child, so that an average family with two children will have a saving of 400 marks. This is sufficient to buy four small radio sets, or one radiogram; or two bicycles; or new winter coats for the whole family, with something over for gloves; or for a very good summer holiday for the whole family, with plenty over for spending money.

The official announcement of the price cut stated in part:

"The working people of the German Democratic Republic have done much to increase labour productivity and to reduce costs. As a result of this, and of the fraternal help of the Soviet Union and the People's Democracies it has become possible to carry out a far-reaching reduction in prices.

"This price reduction will produce savings of about 600,000,000 marks for the population by the end of 1954, which will mean a total saving of 1,800,000,000 marks during 1955.

"In order to continue with the policy of constantly improving the standard of living it is necessary that all productive persons in our Republic should continue to make the greatest efforts to raise labour productivity, reduce costs, increase the range of goods produced, and improve quality, thus providing the basis for further steps to improve the living standard of the working people."

Heroes Remembered

Throughout East Germany, the victims of the nazi terror were commemorated on September 12th, the annual day of remembrance.

In East Berlin more than 100,000 persons from both parts of the city rallied on the Thaelmann Platz at an impressive ceremony, where German, Soviet and French resistance fighters pledged themselves to resist any attempt to re-arm the nazis.

In West Berlin a memorial meeting scheduled by the Association of Victims of the Nazi Regime was banned by Police President Stumm, and had to be transferred te East Berlin.

West Germany 1954

Speaking from a platform decorated with the Imperial War Flag, nazi Field Marshall Kesselring, war criminal sentenced to death by a British court, addresses members of the militaristic "Stahlhelm" (Steel helmet) at Recklinghausen, British Zone, on August 29th. On the right, part of his uniformed, jack-booted audience, wearing beswastikaed medals from World War Two.

Invitation to British Trade Unions

"VISIT EAST GERMANY"

August 30th 1954

Dear Brothers,

On behalf of its 5 million members, the Central Board of the Free German Trade Union Federation of the German Democratic Republic sends greetings to the 86th annual congress of British Trade Unions.

We address both the congress and the workers of Great Britain, because we believe that the trade unions of all European countries should be foremost in achieving the desire of the peoples and above all of the working class of Europe for general security and a higher living standard.

We regard the remilitarisation of West Germany as the underlying cause of present international tension in Europe. We also know that the working class of Great Britain is seriously alarmed at the fact that the old revengeful forces of German militarism are being re-established in West Germany.

The workers of Great Britain have not forgotten that a militarist Germany was the starting point of two world wars. They still remember the nights of terror in Coventry and London and the great sacrifices the British people had to make in the effort to beat off fascist aggression, the effects of which are still felt today.

All honest men and women are unanimous in the conviction that it would be absurd to rearm a West German state controlled by revengeful militarists and nazis. In view of the aggressive designs of German militarism such rearmament, carried through under the guise of "defense," must inevitably lead the peoples of Europe into new disaster; this would apply in the first place to Germany's neighbours, including Great Britain.

We know that the workers of Great Britain are at one with us in their desire for the creation of a system of collective security in Europe, which alone can ensure peace and a life of peaceful work and prosperity.

The trade unions of the German Democratic Republic welcome the fact that numerous resolutions against German remilitarisation have been submitted to the 86th Trade Union Congress.

We wish to assure British trade unions that the overwhelming majority of the German people is also opposed to German remilitarisation. In West Germany, too, the fighting spirit of the working class and of patriotic circles in other sections of the population against rearmament and the burdens imposed by EDC is growing ever stronger.

Proof of this are the series of big strikes in Hamburg and Bavaria and the growing wage demands of workers and employees in almost all branches of industry.

Millions of German workers are filled with anxiety at the stationing of American atomic guns on West German soil, preparations to blow up bridges and roads and recruitment of young people into a new army of aggression. They are deeply concerned about the contents of the Bonn Treaty of 1952 according to which West Germany is to remain under foreign occupation for fifty years.

At the same time West German workers protest against the continual rise in prices which burdens working-class households with an additional 5.5 thousand million marks. They protest against low wages and high rates and taxes, against increased exploitation in all branches of industry and against the general curtailment of democratic and trade union rights to which West German workers and employees are at present subjected.

The trade unions of the German Democratic Republic wish to assure British workers and the delegates to the 86th annual congress that, in contrast to the general trend in West Germany, the forces of militarism and fascism have lost all footing in the German Democratic Republic.

It is well known that the stringpullers of German militarism and fascism, Krupp, Thyssen and consorts, who are also hated in Britain, and the Prussian Junkers, the fertile breeding ground of militarism, have been deprived of all power in this part of Germany.

The machinery of state in the German Democratic Republic has been thoroughly cleansed of all militarist and nazi elements. The trade unions enjoy all rights of co-determination and all possible facilities for unhampered trade union activity at work.

The policy pursued by the German Democratic Republic is directed solely towards preserving peace, re-establishing German unity and creating a united, peace-loving, democratic and independent state, living on friendly terms with all peace-loving peoples.

The trade unions in the German Democratic Republic consider their most important task to be the education of their members in a spirit of proletarian internationalism and friendship with the workers of all lands, including those of Great Britain. The Free German Trade Union Federation stands for fraternal co-operation with the trade unions of Great Britain.

We speak for the five million trade unionists in the German Democratic Republic when we extend a warm welcome to a delegation of British trade unionists to visit our Republic.

We propose that a delegation of British trade unionists be sent to the German Democratic Republic, where they can convince themselves at first hand of our peaceful work of reconstruction, and should be glad if you would inform us as soon as possible when such a visit can be arranged.

Wishing your congress all success,
With trade union greetings,

Herbert Warnke, Central Board, Free German Trade Union Federation

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"WEST GERMANY MAKES WEAPONS"

—Paris Disclosure

West Germany has begun with the production of super-modern weapons of war, including electronic and atomic weapons, the Paris independent newspaper "La Tribune des Nations" disclosed on August 27th. Here are the main points from the Paris article, which was signed by Jerome Cardan:

Without awaiting the ratification of EDC, Germany has begun the production of super-modern electronic, jet and atomic weapons.

If EDC is ratified (the article was written before the French rejection of the treaty, ed.), this production programme will be continued as part of the normal production programme of the Wehrmacht. If EDC is not ratified, and if any basic change in the situation should lead to quadripartite inspections, then Germany will have gambled and lost.

In the meantime, however, a factory for the production of radioactive 'death dust', with a camouflaged atomic pile, is already functioning, and in the margin it may be remarked that this explains the journey to the east of the member of parliament Herr Schmidt-Wittmack.

The Degussa factory on Lake Constance is turning out titan reaction blowers; visol fuel for jet use is being made in the 'Ruhrchemie' factories in Oberhausen-Holten.

In Mannheim and in Ludwigshafen the factories of the former IG Farben combine are manufacturing nerve gas, as a result of which there was a remarkable epidemic of 'suicide by the use of insect exterminators' at the end of 1953.

The company of Lehfeld und Co., in Heppenheim, Bergstraße, makes U-boat detectors of a perfected 'Aadie' type. The firm of Schmitz und Co., in Frankfurt/Main, Hochstraße, manufactures infra-red detectors for night fighters and long-range bombers. These remarkable instruments make it possible for the planes to aim bombs without fail at steel furnaces, ships, cities and all other objects creating infra-red rays.

The Borsig Locomotive Factory makes jet-bombers which are superior to the American 'Honest John'.

Ferdinand Rhode Eisenbau, Hanover, Gartenstrasse 9—13 makes Bailey bridges for crossing rivers.

Research into the war use of bacteria is being pursued at the Bayer factory in Hoechst/Main (Formerly IG Farben).

The Krupp factories have produced as a prototype the first atomic cannon on American lines. Mass production will begin at the end of the year.

The oil refineries and factories are preparing production of explosives of the RDX type.

Napalm is being turned out in hundreds of tons in the factories of the Rheinpreussen Company.

All this mass of production is endangered, since it can no longer be camouflaged, if Germany is not allowed to arm officially before the end of the year.

This explains the desperate pressure which the 'German Lobby' and the 'German Desk' in Washington are exerting on Paris in the attempt to ensure German rearmament, in one form or another, before January 1st 1955.

MURDERER RELEASED

SS General Kurt Meyer, sentenced to death for murdering Canadian prisoners of war, was released by the British authorities in West Germany on September 7th.

On his release Meyer received the following marks of appreciation for his war crimes:

1. He was given a screaming welcome by several thousands of nazi-minded citizens of Moenchen-Gladbach, his home town, headed by the town fire brigade band: SS veterans presented him with a huge cake iced with the words "free at last".

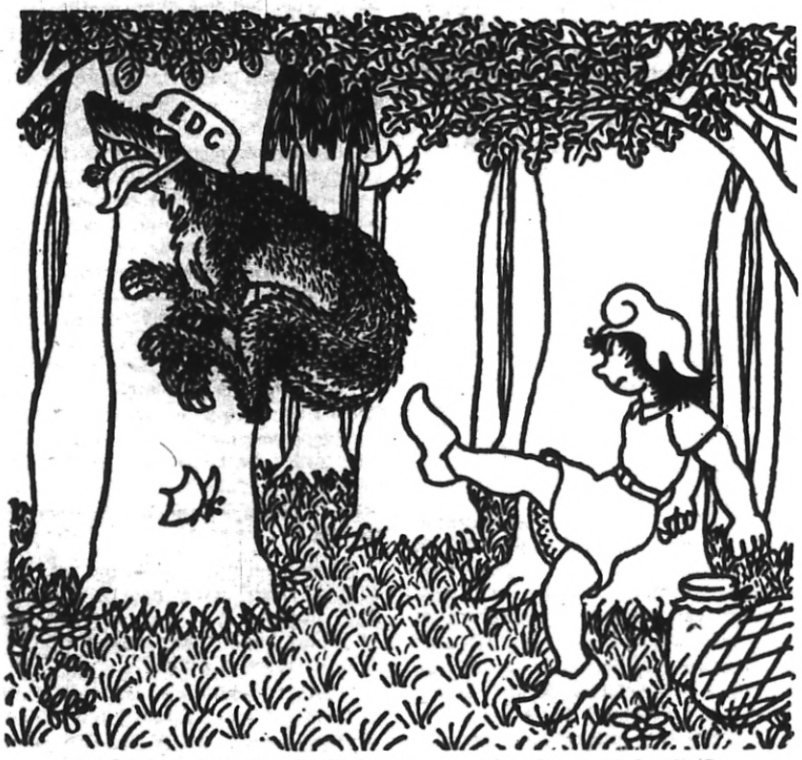
2. He was given the free use of a new red convertible car by the grateful directors of the Auto-Union motor company.

3. He was given an executive job in a large brewery at Hagen.

4. The West German government paid him out 4,800 marks (about 1000 dollars) compensation for his imprisonment.

5. He was due to draw his full pension as a retired general as soon as the necessary formalities were completed.

Ex-General Meyer was sentenced to death in December 1945 for shooting 18 Canadian prisoners of war in Normandy. The sentence was later changed to life imprisonment, then reduced to fifteen years.



Little French Ridinghood: "Tell it to your American grandmother"

(Jean Effel in "Eulenspiegel", Berlin)

LEIPZIG FAIR REPORT:

"WE WANT TO BUY FROM WEST"

– Prime Minister Grotewohl

The German Democratic Republic wants to buy goods to the value of 250,000,000 dollars from West Europe in the coming year, Prime Minister Otto Grotewohl announced at the formal opening of the Leipzig Fair on September 4th.

The opening was attended by official representatives of all the Peoble's Democracies and the Soviet Union, and by leading commercial figures from nearly all the 46 capitalist countries with which East Germany has trade relations.

Prime Minister Grotewohl announced that no fewer than 21 of these capitalist countries were exhibiting at this year's Leipzig Fair, a far bigger figure than at any time since the war, and that these exhibits were growing steadily larger and more representative.

"This year's Leipzig Fair also shows what the German Democratic Republic can produce," Prime Minister Grotewohl stated. "The aim of our foreign trade policy is to increase the import of consumption goods by exporting more of our machines, instruments and so on. We aim to import both more consumer goods, and a broader selection or such goods.

"The steady increase in production in the German Democratic Republic together with the cancellation by the Soviet Union of all reparations and post-war debts, and the handing-over to the Republic of the last Soviet owned factories, has made it possible for us to increase our exports all round. We plan to expand our exports by 1955 by 750,000,000 dollars over the 1953 figure.

"For this reason we shall be ready to import goods to the value of 250,000,000 dollars from the West European countries.

"So far we have concluded trade and payments agreements with 15 capitalist countries, and we have advantageous trade relations with a further 31 capitalist countries.

"Our trade with the Soviet Union, China and the People's Democracies is also of the highest importance. In 1952 our trade with these countries constituted about 65% of our total foreign trade, but this proportion has grown today to 76%. Our foreign trade in 1954 will be over four times as great as in 1950.

"Trade with the countries of the democratic camp is done on the basis of long-term trade agreements, which make far-sighted planning possible, and thus guarantee a sure market for our products."

LONDON PAPERS ON LEIPZIG FAIR

"Among the many messages inscribed in banners across the fronts of buildings in the city of Leipzig there is to be found the simple capitalist precept- 'Trade is a link in international understanding' . . .

"Communist political and economic policy alike are tending to discover the advantages of an international market place in which the western world, too, can be represented if it chooses.

"Without some gain of self-confidence in the Communist countries the discovery would probably not have been made. They feel that they have something to show. With one or two exceptions this confidence does not come from a pride in their old crafts or traditional products, but from the construction of new industries under their various five-year plans . . .

". . . The 'people's democracies' have all persisted in their common desire, and when they appear now in the showplace of Communist economics, they present themselves as industrial states.

"The role is in no way new to the Soviet zone of Germany, which, however, appears to have gained in confidence too, and even in prosperity with the changes of the past 15 months. Since the last Leipzig Fair, the remaining 33 undertakings which had been in Soviet ownership have been handed over to the German Democratic Republic; they included very important parts of the east German industrial economy.

"East German industry fills the bulk of the fair; and the great bulk of east German industry is in the big nationally owned firms. Year by year these firms are devoting more resources to their annual display at Leipzig. Public policy may well be in the forefront of the motives which cause them to do this. There are still in East Germany strong evidences of unsatisfied demand on every hand, and these publicly owned engineering and electrical firms are having a harder struggle to keep pace with the growth of their order books than to find markets."

The Times, London, September 8th 1954.

"West German exhibitors at the Leipzig Fair have nearly doubled their number this year to 1,100. In all they have taken about 15,000 square yards of space.

"British exhibitors are the third in terms of space after Belgium and France among the West European countries. But the British pavilion is the most attractive display . . .

"The East German heavy industry is 'showing its muscles' at least to its own people and other Communist visitors. Most of the other Communist countries have big machines outside their halls.

"One East German nationalised firm making high-tension insulators claimed today a regular trade with Scandinavia, Switzerland and Austria and the Orient. They had, they told me, sold these goods to a British firm in recent years."

Daily Telegraph, London, September 7th 1954.

"British exhibitors at the Leipzig Fair are beginning to do business. A chemical firm, for example, has reached the final stage in deals with East Germany worth about one million pounds in both imports and exports . . .

"British exhibitors include makers of cars, digging and earth moving equipment, ball bearings, tractors, agricultural machines, steel rolling mill parts, air compressors and surveying instruments.

"They have had visits from official buyers from Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Bulgaria, Russia and China. China's buying group visited the relatively small British section before that of any other country."

Daily Telegraph, London, September 8th 1954.

BERLIN RE-VISITED

By Wilfred Burchett

The author of this article is an Australian journalist who after the war represented the London "Daily Express" and the "Times" in Germany and other European countries.

For the past four years he has been covering Far Eastern affairs, with his headquarters at Peking.

The most striking thing about Berlin for me, after an absence of five years, is the normality of life in the Democratic Sector. It is the first time I have known normality in Berlin. When I first visited this city, in November 1938, the smoke was still rising from the burned out ruins of synagogues, the streets were filled with marching troops, the radio screamed hate and threats against Czechoslovakia.

Rubble Heap

When I came the second time at the end of the war, Berlin was a heap of rubble, there was misery and hopelessness in the grey faces of the people. Shops were bare of everything but antiques and chemical concoctions labelled "Tastes like fish," or "Tastes like ham."

My memory of Berlin in spring 1949, when I saw it last, was of a city grey-faced, unsmiling, miserably clad people — except for the sleek black marketeers of Kurfuerstendamm.

What a change today in the Democratic Sector! It was impossible not to notice, within the first few hours after arrival, the colour in people's faces, the sparkle in their eyes, the firm step of well-shod feet. People are well clad, they look well-fed — and above all they look happy. The people, in fact, look normal — and normality is a highly abnormal state for a generation or more of Berliners.

"Good old Days"

I well remember the "good old days" of 1938 to which some critics of today still like to look back. Apart from the fact that the Nazis were in power, the concentration camps full of innocent Jews and political victims, the shadow of the Gestapo over the entire city, the living conditions for Berlin's citizens were miserable. The coarse black bread tasted like a mixture of sand and sawdust. Even as a privileged foreigner, I had to queue up for one egg on the odd occasion when an "egg-day" was announced and present my passport weekly for an ounce or two of butter. (Hitler was promising white bread, plenty of butter and eggs as a reward for the conquest of Czechoslovakia.) A shirt I bought in a fashionable shop in Kurfuerstendamm turned into a sort of porridge when my landlady imprudently washed it in hot water. Everything in the "good old days" was ersatz except the guns and tanks and Hitler's hate. Only the well-uniformed soldiers had shirts that did not turn into porridge in hot water. Only the troops had colour in their cheeks. The rest of the population had the greyish-sallow complexion which I began to think was the natural colouring of Germans.

Miracle

With these memories of the immediate pre-war period and the terrible post-war years of semi-starvation, it seems like a miracle to step, for instance, into the "Automat" on Alexander Platz, the main traffic hub of East Berlin. It is crowded at all hours of the day with wage and salary workers, shoppers, school lads and lasses, helping themselves to pairs of steaming sausages and excellent white rolls, or dropping a coin into the automat and hauling out ham, salami, cheese, caviar or any one of a score or more varieties of sandwich rolls and washing them down with beer, wine, schnapps, fruit juice or coffee according to taste. So normal for other cities, but so highly abnormal for Berlin.

But there is miracle after miracle to be seen in the Democratic Sector. I dropped into the Market Hall near the Alexander Platz one evening shortly before closing time. It was crowded with shoppers but there were still mountains of food of the type never to be seen in 1949. Apples, pears, cherries, plums, apricots, peaches, vegetables of all descriptions in ample supply — as they are in footpath stalls and market barrows all over the city. As fast as the mounds melted away into customers' shopping baskets, they were replenished from nearby cases and sacks. Eggs which in 1938 were to be had at the rate of about one per person per week — as long as you were not Jewish, in which case you got none — are plentiful.

Lively Market

Sausages and salami of every caliber and colour adorned the market stalls and there was a lively section for rabbits and poultry. Butter and other fats, together with meat and sugar, are still rationed, but the ration is a much more generous one than in 1938 and there is plenty available on the free market at a slightly higher price. The ration of butter, sugar and meat I found was so generous that consumption per head in the German Democratic Republic is higher than in un-rationed West Germany, where high prices and unemployment are strict rationing factors. A stroll through the market halls provides the clue to the colour in people's faces in the Democratic Sector. They are getting their vitamins. They are getting fats and plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables. Food is ample and varied. It is no longer limited to potatoes and turnips which for long periods ever since 1914 have been the staple diet of the majority of the German people.

To go to bed with a full stomach has been a major preoccupation of the German people for most of the last forty years, which is why the normality of finding market stalls bulging with fresh food of high quality and obviously being bought in ample quantities by ordinary working people is the more striking in the Democratic Sector in 1954.

Politeness

Other profound changes towards normalisation have also taken place. Two things which struck me in my first two visits to Germany were the lack of ordinary courtesy in the streets and the fact that in quite ordinary conversations, Germans shouted at you as if they were addressing a public meeting. "Might is right" was German policy in those days and this was reflected in day to day behaviour. Even on the footpaths women, cripples and lightweights had to leap out of the way of large self-important figures who strode in a fixed line, never weaving

to right or left unless there appeared an inevitable collision with someone approaching their own weight. The lesser figures leapt aside or if they did not move quickly enough were knocked into the gutter with a glare which demanded an apology for being weak or crippled or for obstructing the path of might, weight or authority. And every public functionary from policeman to postman bellowed like a bull even when imparting the least important information to someone three feet away from him.

Courteous Police

But this too is changing. People are becoming polite to each other in Democratic Germany. And voices have been lowered. For the first time in Germany I have heard a policeman talking in normal tones to cyclists or pedestrians who have committed some minor traffic offence.

This normalisation of social behaviour is probably a reflection of the normalcy of life in general in the German Democratic Republic. In the Nazi period every minor functionary was a little Hitler and it was Hitler's raving and bellowing that set the pattern for superiors addressing inferiors. Any public functionary was superior to an ordinary civilian. Hitler's tanks and troops ready to trample the world underfoot set the pattern for trampling the weak and crippled underfoot on the streets. But the whole emphasis in East Germany is for normalcy, for peace and friendship with other nations. One switches on the radio and instead of ravings of racial hate, one hears about some workers' delegation having arrived from Poland, France or a score of other countries as guests of German workers, or of a delegation of German workers having returned from Czechoslovakia, Hungary or one of the other People's Democracies.

Service

One of the most remarkable and almost unbelievable changes that have taken place is the attitude of public servants. The German bureaucrat in the past was a bye-word for pompous self-importance. He delighted in displaying his authority and exploiting it to the maximum on every victim who fell into his clutches. And the simplest operation in bank, post office or any public institution was made as complicated as possible. The pomposity and arrogance, the ire and insults that were handed down step by step throughout the hierarchy of German bureaucracy from Minister to Under-Secretary to Chief of Department and so on fell with accumulated weight on the heads of the unfortunate individuals who had to deal with even the least important of public officials. This was true from Bismarck to Hitler and a whole literature has grown up around the subject.

The German Democratic Republic has done much to change this tradition. There is still bureaucracy. There are still forms to be filled in and paper work to be done. But miracle of miracles, there has been a radical transformation of attitude. A new race of young civil servants has sprung up imbued with the idea that they are there to serve the people and not to bully them. They have gradually infected the older generation with the same idea. I have observed quite complicated operations, which in the old days would have taken days of marching through miles of corridors and scores of signatures, completed within a matter of minutes and without any tempers being frayed, through sheer good will and initiative in stripping formalities to their minimum.

Bureaucracy Goes

In a country where the State plays an ever increasing role in production and distribution and which has a century long tradition of the most terrifying bureaucracy, bureaucracy is actually disappearing. And there is a conscious effort by the government and by the officials themselves to make it disappear completely as soon as possible. I have been in many public offices during my short stay and from personal experience and careful observation of civil servants dealing with the people, it is clear that great progress towards this end has been made.

This normalcy of behaviour may not strike the casual visitor to the German Democratic Republic, or someone who visits Germany for the first time, but for anyone who knew pre-war Germany or who knows the West Germany of the postwar years, this in itself is a great revolution. It is a reflection of the complete change of outlook and aims which the government of the GDR pursues, the policy of peace and friendship with all nations, of equal rights for all regardless of sex, race or religion, a policy under which the State and its apparatus exist to serve the people. One feels on every hand that the people are important, they are the masters; one feels that the working people who produce and distribute the things to eat and wear and the goods necessary to make life worth living are now on top.

Terrible Mess

Nowhere does one feel this more sharply than in Stalin Allee, the former Frankfurter Allee in the centre of a working class district which war-time bombing reduced to a waste of rubble. When I last saw it in 1948, Frankfurter Allee was a terrible mess. The few shells of buildings still standing were being knocked down, mountains of rubble were being cleared away in handcarts and trucks to make way for the future Stalin Allee. The road paving was so pitted with bomb craters that one was lucky to avoid broken springs if one motored over it.

Today there is a beautifully paved boulevard with green lawns running down the centre, flanked by one-way roads with space for three lanes of traffic. For over a mile the Stalin Allee is bordered by very beautiful new eight-storey cream stone buildings. They are varied in design but form a harmonious architectural ensemble. The ground floors are reserved for spacious shops, modern, light and more beautiful than any that existed in Berlin before the war. In the other seven stories there are splendid apartments for working class families.

After one has driven through the thousands of acres of ruins and semi-ruins which still exist in Berlin despite prodigious rebuilding efforts in the Democratic Sector, and enters this generous bright boulevard, it is like clambering out of a cellar into the sun-light. Here is the Berlin of the future, a future which is taking

Democratic
GERMAN REPORT

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shape under the hands of German workers before the eyes of the Berlin people. It is typical and fitting that this solid glimpse into the future is being built in the heart of a working class district. The contents of the shop-windows and the well stocked shelves inside the shops are almost as spectacular as the buildings themselves. There are the fruits of good German workmanship and technique, available to the people, products of German workers' diligent toil in the hard first post-war years now being turned back to German workers at prices which, increasingly, all can afford.

The display windows of Stalin Allee can compare with those of many another West European capital. One of the displays which attracts most attention from visitors is that of the Zeiss works in Jena. Western newspapers had written time and again that Zeiss was finished, dismantled by the Russians, could never again enter production. In fact, Zeiss production is now far above pre-war figures. And its products are available to the Berlin people. The large sales-room is constantly crowded with buyers of the Contax and Primarflex cameras — among the best in the world for the 35 mm and 120×120 mm class.

Ordinary People

The customers are the ordinary working folk of the German Democratic Republic, buying high quality cameras at prices far below world market values for the famous Zeiss cameras, binoculars and other precision and optical instruments — the finest in the world. Because Americans and others from the western sector used to flock into the Zeiss sales-rooms buying half a dozen cameras at a time with black-market currency, sales are now restricted to bona-fide residents of the German Democratic Republic, who quite rightly have first priority on the goods which they themselves produce.

Radio and television sets, gramophones for long-playing records, frigidaires, motor cars and motorbikes, high grade furnishings of every description, cotton and woollen textiles and an astonishing variety of local and imported foodstuffs are on display and sale for immediate delivery. Prices for necessities in general are reasonable in relation to salaries in the German Democratic Republic, although some may seem high if arbitrarily converted into western currencies at the official exchange rate. Some luxuries are still expensive, but first things come first.

The fruits of East-West trade are apparent if one steps for a moment into a wine shop. One finds French Burgundy alongside Soviet champagne, Hungarian Tokay, Bulgarian red wine neck to neck with Moselle from Western Germany. There is an infinite variety of wines, schnapps and liqueurs from every corner of Europe, not to mention the famous Czech Pilsener beer, and it is the Berlin workers who are buying and drinking them. Imported canned meat, fish and vegetables, especially from the Soviet Union and Hungary, are in plentiful supply and reasonably priced.

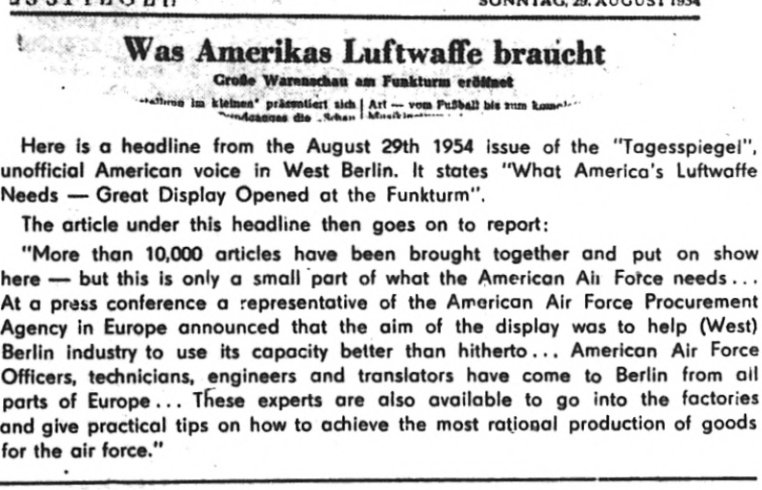
In the luxurious Budapest and Warsaw restaurants in Stalin Allee one can taste respectively Hungarian and Polish food to the tune of first-class orchestras. To take a stroll along Stalin Allee and feast one's eyes on the vast range of consumer goods already being turned out in the Democratic Republic and already available to the public, is to convince oneself that the economy is on a sound and even flourishing basis. There is a normalcy in the Stalin Allee shop windows which seems fantastic when one takes into account the ruined economy of a few years ago. Stalin Allee itself is a great morale builder to the Berliners who know it is only the nucleus around which their new life is being built.

It is of course not necessary to go to the Stalin Allee to buy the goods displayed and sold there. The same range of goods at the same prices are available in the HO (Trade Organisation) department stores set up all over the city. But because of its size and continuity, the Stalin Allee shop windows constitute a sort of permanent exhibition of production in the Democratic Republic. Stalin Allee is at least one of the very good reasons for the sparkle in the eye and the firm step of the Berliners of the Democratic Sector. Through Stalin Allee they can see where they are going.

There are still plenty of ruins in the Democratic Sector. There will be for years to come, as a grim reminder of the past. But new buildings are springing up on the rubble of the old. They are not building hydrogen bomb shelters as they have started to do in West Berlin — but homes, shops, schools and theatres. The Berliners of the Democratic Sector have the moral satisfaction that they are sailing on a peaceful course, that the Republic of which Berlin is the capital, is bent on peaceful reconstruction and is making most earnest efforts to bring about the peaceful reunification of their country.

When the day comes that the sector boundaries in Berlin are abolished, they will be able to point with pride to what they have accomplished for the common good of all Berliners and all Germans.

WEST BERLIN ARSENAL



ASSPIEGEL SONNTAG, 29. AUGUST 1954

Was Amerikas Luftwaffe braucht

Große Warenschau am Funkturm eröffnet

...stellung im kleinen" präsentiert sich | Art — vom Fußball bis zum Kompa...
...Besuchern die „Schau | Musikinstrum...

Here is a headline from the August 29th 1954 issue of the "Tagesspiegel", unofficial American voice in West Berlin. It states "What America's Luftwaffe Needs — Great Display Opened at the Funkturm".

The article under this headline then goes on to report:

"More than 10,000 articles have been brought together and put on show here — but this is only a small part of what the American Air Force needs... At a press conference a representative of the American Air Force Procurement Agency in Europe announced that the aim of the display was to help (West) Berlin industry to use its capacity better than hitherto... American Air Force Officers, technicians, engineers and translators have come to Berlin from all parts of Europe... These experts are also available to go into the factories and give practical tips on how to achieve the most rational production of goods for the air force."

BERLIN NOTEBOOK

By John Peet

Is the British Army of the Rhine in West Germany actively assisting Wehrmacht veterans to hold their rallies?

My question is prompted by something which happened in Hamburg, in the British Zone, at the end of August.

On August 23rd the Hamburg newspaper "Welt" published a small advertisement stating:

"Former members of the 12th Panzer Division should get in touch with Gerhard Witte, 61 Blomkamp, Hamburg-Osdorf, telephone 44-11-91, extension 417".

Queer Phone

Such advertisements are an everyday occurence in the West German press, but there was something a little special about this one: telephone number 44-11-91 is the number of the British Army headquarters in Hamburg.

A German journalist was intrigued by this, and dialled the number. When he was connected he requested extension 417. The phone buzzed, and a fruity British voice said: "Colonel Anthony here".

"I should like to speak to Gerhard Witte" said the German journalist. "Just one moment, and I shall connect you," the British voice replied, and did.

Herr Witte explained to the reporter that the purpose of the advertisement was to get in touch with former members of the 12th Panzer Division, in which he had served as Lieutenant Colonel in the campaigns against Poland, France and the Soviet Union. He wanted to invite them to a rally being held in the town of Osterode on September 4th, he said.

What Job?

But Herr Witte refused to say in what capacity he was working in British Army headquarters.

The Munich weekly newspaper "Deutsche Woche" commented in its issue on September 8th on the strange case of Colonel Witte's telephone number in these words:

"1. The Occupation Statute is still in force in the Federal Republic. Everything which happens must therefore be in accordance with the wishes and orders of the relevant occupation power, in this case the British.

"2. There could be no associations of veterans if they were not at least tolerated by the occupation power, in this case the British.

"3. In this case the toleration goes so far that the former Lieutenant Colonel of a former Panzer Division, who is working for the British (and obviously not working there as a floor-sweeper) is able to use this official address for the purpose of preparing a Wehrmacht rally.

"4. The logical conclusion is that the occupation force, in this case the British, does not merely tolerate the veterans' associations, but gives them its active support, and may even keep the strings in its hand with the help of people such as Witte."

What about a question in the British House of Commons?

Un-De-Nazified

In 1945 in many West German cities, streets and squares were "denazified", and named after anti-nazi hereos instead of after Hitler, Goering et al.

In many cases the streets and squares have been subsequently "undenazified", and named again after Prussian generals, although there is, as yet, no record of a new "Hitler Platz".

In Karlsruhe, in the American Zone, the anti-nazi street names have not been changed: instead their origins are being falsified. The Municipal Bank of Karlsruhe has issued, as a service to customers, a street plan, which gives in a few words, the origin of the various street names.

Reinhold Frank Strasse was named after a brave resistance fighter who was executed by the nazis in Ploetzensee jail near Berlin. The street plan says simply "Died in Ploetzensee, Berlin," and leaves one to assume that he died of natural causes in that otherwise quiet Berlin suburb.

Ludwig Marum Strasse is named after another anti-nazi hero, who was tortured to death in the nazi concentration camp at Kislau. Once again the Municipal Bank street plan states briskly "Died at Kislau."

Attlee, Flatly

Mr Clement Attlee, leader of the British Labour Party, has been publishing in the New York Times a series of articles on his impressions during his recent tour of China. I have no space here to comment on his style, which would, I think, entitle him to second prize in an essay competition for ten-year-old boys, but one of his downright flat statements (very flat, in fact) needs an answer. In the article published on September 9th, Mr Attlee wrote:

"Except for Mao Tse-tung himself, who is of peasant origin, the leadership, as is usual in Communist-controlled countries, is drawn from the middle class. It is only in social democratic countries that men with working class backgrounds fill the important positions in government."

Since Mr Attlee would certainly include East Germany amongst the "Communist-controlled countries", let us have a quick look at the government here.

President Wilhelm Pieck is a carpenter by trade; Prime Minister Otto Grotewohl is a printer; Deputy Premier Walter Ulbricht is a joiner; Deputy Prime Minister Heinrich Rau is a metal worker; a total of ten of the cabinet ministers are of working class origin.

(In Mr Attlee's last Labour Cabinet in Britain there were eight ministers of working class origin).

Disappointment

On another page we report the big price cut in East Germany. The "Neue Zeitung," official U. S. newspaper in West Berlin, also reported the price cut in its issue of September 7th. This is what it said:

"The price reduction announced by Soviet-German Premier Grotewohl has caused great disappointment in large sections of the population in the Soviet Zone."

Do you feel disappointment when prices go down?

Questions & Answers

The Committee for German Unity in Berlin has published a little book called "250 Questions and Answers", which gives facts and figures on most aspects of life in the German Democratic Republic.

We have obtained a supply of this book, which is indispensable for everyone interested in the German problem, and will be glad to send a copy to any reader outside East Germany who would like one.

The book is at present only available in German.

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